

RESCHEDULE LETTER - MARCH 1, 2002

Dear Participant,

We very much regret that we must reschedule the Information Literacy Meeting of Experts, initially scheduled for April 11-13, 2002, in Prague, The Czech Republic. There are two main reasons behind the need to reschedule the meeting.

First, U.S. government agencies, which initially expressed interest in supporting the meeting, were unable to follow through, in part because of the events of 9-11, and the attendant need to reprogram substantial government funds to support and strengthen anti-terrorism and homeland security programs. While some money has been promised, it is insufficient to defray the full transportation and on site expenses for the meeting.

Second, private foundations and other organizations (such as the World Bank) that we have approached are unable to take action quickly enough between now and mid-April 2002 (a scant six weeks away). As you probably know, most foundations require a considerable number of internal steps, such as peer reviews, different departmental and successive levels of concurrence, and so forth, before funds can be released.

Reluctantly, therefore, we must reschedule the meeting. While we cannot announce a rescheduled date, we anticipate that it can be sometime in the fall or early winter. We propose that the venue remains Prague, and we plan to remain in close communication with our Czech hosts to complete the logistical details.

The good news is that the delay will allow us to move more quickly in getting the invited papers edited for publishing and online dissemination. Your paper will soon be part of a rich information resource that can be used by public policy-makers, business and industry, educators, and others concerned with information literacy. This strategic, timely, and readily accessible resource will demonstrate, incontrovertibly, the immense value of a meeting such as ours, bringing together experts from around the world to interact and share their ideas and experiences. Ultimately, all nations will benefit from improvements in their citizens' information literacy, and in so doing help close the gap between the information haves and have nots, especially in developing and transition countries. That hope is one important reason why UNESCO remains very supportive of our meeting, and has, just in the last few weeks, reaffirmed its steadfast support, despite the need to reschedule the meeting.

Therefore, we urge you to complete your commissioned papers by no later than March 15th. We believe that, in the eyes of the foundations, which we hope will eventually provide support, your scholarly papers will be seen as a powerful and tangible demonstration of our commitment to the goals of the meeting. We will pay you the promised stipend as soon as your paper is accepted and you have furnished us with the method of payment details. In view of the postponement we have decided to pay all authors, including those who kindly agreed to waive the stipend and apply those funds as an offset to their travel expenses.

A provisional programme for the meeting was recently posted to the NCLIS website, as well as a tentative list of paper assignments to one of four "cluster categories" (i.e. learning, public policy, economic development, and human factors). Participant biographical sketches, paper abstracts, and photos are also being posted as they are received. If you have not yet furnished these materials to us, please do so. Please check our website to verify these materials at <http://www.nclis.gov/libinter/infolitconf&meet/infolitconf&meet.html>

Please stand by until the new meeting date is scheduled. We will keep you informed as to our progress in reaching the necessary funding to allow us to reschedule the meeting.

NCLIS Chairperson Martha Gould, NCLIS Vice Chairperson Dr. Joan Challinor, Dr. F. Woody Horton, Jr., Dr. Patricia Senn Breivik of the National Forum on Information Literacy, and Mr. Philippe Queau of UNESCO join me in expressing our heartfelt thanks for your interest and scholarly contributions, and we promise to do everything in our power to make the rescheduled meeting a reality.

Sincerely yours,

/S/

Robert S. Willard
Executive Director
U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS)